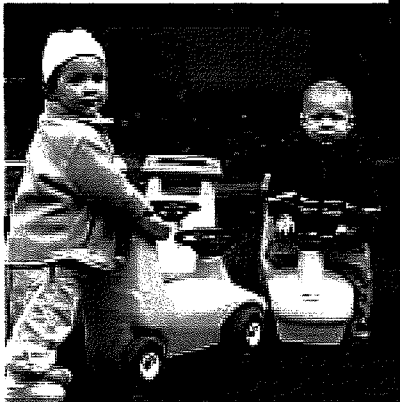


# ***Enhancing Early Care and Education***



## **Research to Practice 2005**

**KIDS  
NOW**

Kentucky Invests in Developing Success

University of Kentucky and University of Louisville KIDS NOW Evaluation Project  
Sponsored by Kentucky Department of Education

## WHAT WE KNOW

There are mixed results related to participation in the early care and education components of the KIDS NOW Initiative

- Overall familiarity and participation has *slightly* decreased, with significant decreases in the Healthy Start and Community Early Childhood Councils
- There was significantly more participation in the subsidy program over last year
- Participation in early care and education components of Initiative and perceived benefits of those components remain strongly correlated.
- The quality of care and education is lowest in programs that serve large numbers of children on subsidy and minority children, although these programs are more likely to participate in the early care and education components of the Initiative.

High preschool quality is related to specific components of the KIDS NOW Initiative.

- Programs most likely to participate in STARS for KIDS NOW have the highest *Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale – Revised* (ECERS-R) scores, as do programs that have the highest STARS ratings
- Those programs that are the most involved in Community Early Childhood Councils scores highest on the ECERS-R
- Low turnover rates are evident in the highest quality preschool programs
- Programs that serve high percentages of children with disabilities have the highest program quality as measured on the ECERS-R and *Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation* (ELLCO)

Programs that have the most positive language and literacy environments share a number of similar characteristics related to the KIDS NOW Initiative

- Programs most likely to participate in STARS for KIDS NOW have the highest ELLCO scores, as do programs that have the highest STARS ratings
- Programs that score highest on the ELLCO are led by directors who are the most familiar with the Initiative
- Those programs that are most involved in Community Early Childhood Councils have the highest ELLCO scores



High quality infant toddler programs share similar characteristics related to the early care and education components of the KIDS NOW Initiative

- Programs most likely to participate in STARS for KIDS NOW have the highest *Infant-Toddler Environmental Rating Scale – Revised* (ITERS-R) scores, as do programs that have the highest STARS ratings
- Programs that score highest on the ITERS-R are led by directors who are the most familiar with the Initiative
- Those programs that are most involved in Community Early Childhood Councils have the highest ITERS-R scores
- Programs with the highest ITERS-R scores have the largest number of employees who participate in the scholarship program.

Child Outcomes relate to the quality of the program

- Preschool children score higher on some language and literacy measures when they attend classrooms with higher subscale scores on the ECERS-R
- Preschool children score higher on some language, literacy, and numeracy measures when they attend classrooms with higher subscale scores on the ELLCO

Programs for minority children and those that serve large numbers of children on subsidy are not sufficiently meeting the needs of those children

- Children who receive the child care subsidy score lower on language and literacy measures than children who do not receive child care subsidy
- Programs serving large numbers of minority children have the lowest language/reasoning and interaction subscale scores on the ECERS-R
- Programs serving large numbers of children who receive the child care subsidy have the lowest scores on many subscales of the ECERS-R and ELLCO

## WHAT WE NEED TO DO:

### Higher Education and Training/Technical Assistance Entities

- Collaborative efforts between the early care and education community and school districts are needed to identify creative strategies to work with target programs that serve large numbers of children who live in poverty and have large minority populations. Institutes of higher education are uniquely positioned to initiate this needed conversation and provide resources/research to lead to solutions. School districts,

local business leaders, and local communities need to be aware that the achievement gap they are working so hard to address, is beginning before children enter public school.

- Results of the KIDS NOW evaluation needs to be shared with students and providers. Particular emphasis needs to be placed on the fact that Kentucky can now demonstrate relationships between the quality of programs and child outcomes. Areas that relate to positive language, literacy, and numeracy outcomes for young children should be highlighted throughout the curriculum.
- Creative options need to be designed and implemented in the delivery of professional development for child care providers, particularly for those in rural areas. Specifically, professional development opportunities **need** to be offered at times and locations compatible with providers' work schedules.
- Focus coursework, training, and technical assistance efforts on *how* to assess and improve instruction for young children. Align courses with the Early Childhood Core Content. Embed the Kentucky Early Childhood Standards, the Kentucky Early Childhood Assessment Guide, and the Early Childhood Quality Self-Study in coursework, thus increasing the likelihood of improving positive outcomes for young children

#### **Child Care Directors**

- Focus professional development plans with staff in areas that will enhance their interactions with children in ways that promote language and reasoning development. Work to improve the staff/child ratios, particularly in programs that serve large numbers minority children or those on subsidy. This group of young children, in particular, is in need of interactions that promote language and literacy development.
- Become involved in local Community Early Childhood Councils. Access language, literacy, and other resources that are made available through the Councils. Involvement in local Community Early Childhood Councils positively impacts child outcomes, due to many Councils' heavy emphasis on language and literacy. Address deficits identified in personal care routines. Scores on this sub-scale of the ECERS-R and ITERS-R have been substandard

for several years. The low scores are especially troubling considering the danger of children acquiring communicable diseases. Directors will want to access Healthy Start in Child Care to assist them in addressing this challenge.

- Take advantage of professional development opportunities that are available to directors, across the state, at little or no charge. (Director's Credential, Director's Workshops/Seminars, Director's Dial-A-Discussion, etc.).
- Participate in, and encourage participation of your staff in the early care and education components of the KIDS NOW Initiative. Doing so increases the likelihood that the quality of care and education you provide to young children will improve, that staff will remain employed by your program, and ultimately that children will achieve positive outcomes.
- Share strategies for improving early care and education quality with other directors at regional and state meetings. Some specific areas that would be useful to directors would be how to improve the language and literacy environment of centers, and how to leverage federal and state resources to provide high quality infant/toddler care.
- Support staff to improve the quality of the services they provide young children and their families by accessing the seamless professional development system that is in place. Staff can be encouraged to access scholarships that are available to them, as well as community resources such as Healthy Start in Child Care Consultants, and Quality Coordinators. Support staff in implementing the Early Childhood Standards, the Continuous Assessment Guide, and the Quality Self-Study to improve instruction and child outcomes.

#### **Child Care Providers**

- Contact your Professional Development Counselor to access the KIDS NOW scholarship program that will help you to increase your knowledge about how children learn and develop, and learn new skills to improve the daily curriculum for the young children with which you work.
- Seek available resources for improving services to minority children and those who live in poverty, as they are presently receiving the lowest quality of care. Resources include Quality Coordinators, Healthy Start in Child Care Consultants, Early Childhood Mental Health Specialists, Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, Early Childhood Regional Training Centers, Institutes of Higher Education, and First Steps providers.

- Share your expertise with other early childhood professionals. If you are working in a center that is participating in the STARS for KIDS NOW Program, consider presenting information at local, regional and state conferences on how to enhance children's development and learning.
- If you are working in a 3 or 4 STAR for KIDS NOW center, consider seeking your Early Childhood Trainer's credential as an avenue for sharing your expertise with others and enhancing your own professional growth.
- Share information with families about the importance of quality early care and education experiences, and ways they can enhance their child's development at home. Access available resources for doing so such as *Keys to Great Parenting and the Parent Guides to the Kentucky Early Childhood Standards*.
- Work with the director to develop an individual professional growth plan that is linked to the Early Childhood Core Content and will result in increased knowledge and skills for you, and improved child outcomes for the children in your program.

#### References:

- Childress, D.C. (2004). Special instruction and natural environments. *Infants & Young Children: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Special Care Practices*, vol. 17, p. 162.
- Cianciolo, S., Trueblood-Noll, R., Allingham, P. (2004). Health consultation in early childhood settings. *Young Children*, vol. 59, p. 56.
- Crais, E.R., Boone, H.A., Harrison, M., Freund, P., Downing, K., West, T. (2004). Interdisciplinary personnel preparation. *Infants & Young Children: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Special Care Practices*, vol. 17, p. 82.
- Duke, N.K. (2003). Reading to learn from the very beginning: Information books in early childhood. *Young Children*, vol.58, p. 14.
- Dever, M.T., Burts, D.C. (2002). Using family literacy bags to enhance family involvement. *Dimensions of Early Childhood*, vol.30, p.16.

Knapp-Philo, J., Corso, R.M., Brekken, L.J., Heal, H.B. (2004). Training to make and sustain change. *Infants & Young Children: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Special Care Practices*, vol. 17, p. 171.

Lee, G.L. (2002). Three strategies to promote young children's literacy development. *Dimensions of Early Childhood*, vol.30, p.27.

McCoy, M.K. (2003). Language, math, social studies, and... Worms?: Integrating the early childhood curriculum. *Dimensions of Early Childhood*, vol. 31, p. 3.

Pierce, J.C. & Terry, K. (2001). Developing oral language in the early childhood classroom: Children as storytellers. *Kaleidoscope*, vol.16, p. 11.

Rapport, M.J.K., McWilliam, R.A., Smith, B.J. (2004). Practices across disciplines in early childhood. *Infants & Young Children: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Special Care Practices*, vol.17, p. 32.

Warner, L. (2003). Planning effective classroom discovery centers. *Dimensions of Early Childhood*, vol. 31, p. 22.

#### Website Information:

For further information please visit the Kentucky Department of Education Website:

[www.education.ky.gov/KDE](http://www.education.ky.gov/KDE)

#### Core Content:

<http://www.education.ky.gov/KDE/Instructional+Resources/Curriculum+Documents+and+Resources/Core+Content+for+Assessment/Core+Content+Downloads+3.0.htm>

#### Kentucky Early Childhood Standards:

<http://www.education.ky.gov/KDE/Instructional+Resources/Early+Childhood+Development/Kentucky%27s+Early+Childhood+Standards.htm>

#### Regional Training Centers:

<http://www.education.ky.gov/KDE/Instructional+Resources/Preschool/Preschool+Regional+Training+Centers/default.htm>

#### Professional Development:

<http://www.education.ky.gov/KDE/Instructional+Resources/Preschool/Professional+Development+and+Certification/default.htm>

#### Recommended Practice Sites of Interest:

[National Association for the Education of Young Children](http://www.naeyc.org)

[www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org)

[CEC-Division for Early Childhood](http://www.dec-spced.org)

[www.dec-spced.org](http://www.dec-spced.org)